

# German license plates to aid troop security

Army News Service

HEIDELBERG, Germany — U.S. Army Europe's vehicle registration division is working to lower the profile of American vehicles by replacing U.S. forces license plates with standard German plates.

Americans in Europe seem to stand out — in dress, in speech, and in the vehicles they drive — said officials who added that “standout” factor can make Americans easy targets for terrorists.

Changing license plates is just the first step in some cases, experts point out.

“The desired reduced profile will be enhanced if items such as bumper stickers, (Department of Defense) vehicle decals from previous assignments, dealership stickers, unit or association affiliation stickers or anything else that would tend to identify the automobile

as obviously belonging to an American are removed from the vehicle,” said Don Grosz, deputy chief of USAREUR's G-3 antiterrorism division.

While recent events could increase anti-American sentiments among the extremist population in USAREUR host-nation countries, they do not represent a specific threat to DOD personnel, said Grosz. But, he said, it is still important to maintain vigilance and situational awareness at all times and practice individual security awareness.

Vehicle registration began issuing the new plates in December and will continue phasing them in during the next two years.

“The feedback we have gotten has been positive,” said Tom Lorenzini, the USAREUR vehicle registrar. “In some communities we have waiting lists of people who want to get

the German license plates.”

One Heidelberg community member said he and most of his friends have wanted German plates for their vehicles for quite some time.

“I'm very happy to finally have these. It's good to be able to blend in,” said Sam Monroe, a Defense Logistics Agency supply specialist, while affixing a German plate to the front of his vehicle. “Having that big ‘USA’ on my car always made me a bit uncomfortable, especially after the events of the last couple of years.”

To obtain the new plates, USAREUR personnel must visit their local vehicle registration office and re-register their vehicle. They will be required to turn in their current U.S. forces plates.

*Editor's note: Information provided by USAREUR Public Affairs.*



Spc. Matthias Chiroux

Sam Monroe, a Defense Logistics Agency supply specialist, affixes a new German license plate to the rear of his vehicle March 1 in Heidelberg, Germany.

## Trial

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Morris is charged with disobeying a lawful order, an attempt to sell government property, seven specifications of selling government property and one specification of theft of government property.

Huerta-Morales is charged with conspiring to commit larceny and sale of government property.

Woolridge is charged with four specifications of conspiracy to commit larceny and sale of government property, 28 specifications of selling government property and three specifications of theft of government property.

Five Soldiers are currently pending

their Article 32 investigations. Staff Sgt. Matias C. Inocentes is charged with conspiring to commit larceny and sale of government property and two specifications of selling government property.

Staff Sgt. James R. Pennington, is charged with conspiring to commit larceny and sale of government property and two specifications of selling government property.

Sgt. 1st Class James E. Postell is charged with two specifications of conspiring to sell government property.

Sgt. 1st Class Robert G. Stevens is charged with conspiracy to commit larceny and sale of government property and agreeing to sell additional property. He is also charged with the sale of government property.

Spc. Jeffrey N. Blanchard is charged

with conspiring to commit larceny and sale of government property.

The nine Soldiers are assigned to 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, and are currently performing duties at Fort Lewis commensurate to their rank and experience. They did not accompany the brigade to the National Training Center where the brigade is currently undergoing training.



Spc. Laura Bigenho

Dan Tyner, Fort Lewis police officer and traffic accident investigator, talks to a driver after pulling him over on North Gate Road. Tyner is one of several officers on post taking part in the Speed Enforcement Initiative, designed to reduce the number of speeders and accidents on post.

## Driving

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Miraculously, the driver of the vehicle survived.

He spent months in recovery, tending to numerous broken bones and wounds. Dan Tyner, police officer and traffic accident investigator, was at the scene that early morning.

He still thinks back to that day in amazement.

“That was a fatality. (The driver) shouldn't have lived,” Tyner said. “It's just amazing that the guy lived... truly amazing.”

Unfortunately, in many cases, people involved in speed-related accidents are not as fortunate. Speeding is one of the most common, preventable killers, according to Rickey L. Sanders, acting deputy director for the Directorate of Emergency Services here.

“I've seen what speed can do. I've witnessed far too many fatalities through the years where the primary cause of the crash was excessive speeding,” Sanders said.

To help prevent speeding accidents, the post commanding general here has ordered a speeding enforcement initiative for drivers on Fort Lewis.

“The speeding enforcement initiative

is an effort to bring to the attention of the community the inherent dangers of speeding,” Sanders said. “Not only is speeding a violation of law, but more importantly, it poses safety risks to others.”

In addition to increasing awareness of the dangers of speeding, the initiative is also the direct result of an increase in the number of speeders here.

According to Lt. Tom Martin, supervisor of traffic accident investigations, there has been a steady increase of speed violators.

According to Martin, there were 2,182 speed violation tickets written during 2004. In 2005, there were 2,487 speeding tickets written. In January alone, there were 286 speeding tickets issued here, compared to January 2005, when 150 tickets were issued.

With a limited number of police on patrol, it is likely that the number of speeders is even higher than statistics indicate.

Tyner, who has been in law enforcement for more than 20 years, said, “People are more in a rush now than ever.”

Aware of the consequences of speeding, Tyner rarely hesitates to issue a ticket. He does admit, however, that the violator must be speeding “beyond

reason of a doubt.”

“I'd rather write someone a ticket and have them (upset with) me than see them later dead or critically injured,” Tyner said. “However, if (the violation) does go to court, I can't think in my head, ‘Did I legitimately write that person a ticket?’ I certainly wouldn't want to get a ticket that I didn't deserve,” Tyner said.

Oftentimes, the tickets Tyner writes are small penalties compared to the potentially fatal outcome of speeding. A DD Form 1805, or U.S. Magistrate Citation, carries a \$75 fine and is usually issued to both civilian and military violators on post.

A DD Form 1408, or Military Citation, on the other hand, is only issued to military personnel. Although a Military Citation does not carry a fine, its punishment is often worse than that of a U.S. Magistrate Citation. It leaves the punishment up to the service member's unit commander to decide on.

With that in mind, Tyner uses his better judgement when issuing a speeding ticket, while factoring in the degree of speed the driver was going.

For those who are hoping to avoid receiving either of the above tickets, the key is simple: “Do not speed,” Sanders said. If you are worried about

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**Rickey L. Sanders**

getting to and from work on time, whether during the morning, lunch or evening rush when traffic is at its heaviest, Tyner advises that you leave earlier than usual, always allowing extra time when the weather conditions are harsh or unpredictable.

“Posted speed limits are there for a reason,” Sanders said. “Anyone who exceeds that limit, especially under adverse weather conditions, is placing themselves and others at risk of injury or death.”

In January, a young female Soldier

was killed during her morning commute to work on North Gate Road, Martin said. At approximately 45 mph, she did not demonstrate excessive speeding. However, the road conditions were slick from rain, and as a result, she lost control of her vehicle and collided with an oncoming car.

“We want people to know that speeding kills,” Martin said. “The speed limit is only for prime driving conditions — meaning clear day, light traffic and dry roads.”

“People just need to slow down, especially when it rains here,” Tyner said. “In every accident, there's a cause and a factor. It's usually the driver doing or not doing something they were supposed to.”

To help ensure the safety of others by working to reduce speeding here, police officers will be using radar units and unmarked vehicles, and issuing tickets more frequently.

“The odds of getting caught (speeding) are going to increase,” Martin said.

“We're not being sneaky or tricking people,” he said. “We don't set up speed traps. We simply want to reduce the number of speed-related accidents here.”

“It's really to your advantage to slow down.”

## Military pay

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At that time, most members served 30 years, retired in their 50s and typically lived into their 60s, he said. Today, it's typical for service members to retire after 20 years of service to start second careers and to live longer lives.

Restructuring the compensation package will provide more options for service members, Pilling said. Rather than offering no retirement benefit short of 20 years, the proposed system would offer a portable retirement system with reduced-level benefits after 10 years, he explained.

Revising the pay tables to reward time in grade will ensure consistent

benefits for service members promoted ahead of their peers, Pilling said. And by paying equal housing allowances to all members of equal grade in equal locations, the proposed system will reward people “for their performance, not their marital status,” he said.

While bringing the military pay system more on par with systems in the private sector, Pilling said the proposal

recognizes that service in the military is unique. For example, while it calls for greater cost sharing among Tricare recipients, it continues to ensure full medical care after 20 years of service, he noted.

If Rumsfeld approves the plan, it will be subject to congressional review before being introduced, he said.

The secretary established the

Defense Advisory Committee on Military Compensation to study the current pay system and come up with ways to bring it more in line with what service members want and operational needs demand.

The seven-member committee spent a year reviewing the military pay package, holding public hearings and developing its recommendations.